



LIBRARY

CHEPSTOW URBAN AND RURAL DISTRICT COUNCILS.



A N N U A L   R E P O R T

— of the —

M E D I C A L   O F F I C E R   O F   H E A L T H

for the Year 1943

---

LIST OF URBAN DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

CHAIRMAN: Mr. E.J.King, J.P.

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Mr. J. Keenan

COUNCILLORS

Mr. C.E. Morgan

Mr. B. O'Neill

Mr. F.J.Price

Mr.D.H.Davies

Mr. E.J. King

Mr. W.P.Tuck

Mr. J.Keenan

Mr. W.C.Hall

Mr.C.H.Clark, J.P.

Mr. A.J.Proctor

Mr. A.J.James

Mr. C. Hollins

Mr. W. Wyatt

Mr. J. Wadley

Mr. A.W. Andrews

OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL

Clerk ... Mr. A. Gill

Town Surveyor & Inspector

Mr.E.T.Williams, M.R.S.I.

Rating Officer

Mr. G.J. Vincent

Medical Officer of Health

Dr. J.J.O'Reilly, M.B., B.Ch., D.P.H.

Billeting Officer

Mr. V.G.A. Waters

CHEPSTOW RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

List of Rural District Councillors

CHAIRMAN: Mr. A.E.Boye, J.P.

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Mr. W.C.Jones

Councillors

Mr. F. Arnold	Mr. J.E. Liddiard
Mr. R.G.Benjamin	Mr. T.W.Lines
Mr. H.J. Cane	Mrs. M.E. Paget
Mrs. M.D. Harris	Mr. H.L. Price
Mr. J. Edwards	Mr. J.W. Price
Mr. W.H. Gale	Mr. N.W. Price
Mr. A. Hale	Mr. C.R. Read
Mrs. G.I. Heath	Mr. A. Reece
Mr. J.E. Hancock	Mr. J.C. Ford
Mr. W.W. Jones	Mr. S.J. Thorne
Mr. S.M. Hill	Mr. A.W. Wainwright
Mr. A.J. Thomas	Mr. F.C. Walker
Mr. H. Hughes	Mr. W. Watkins
Mr. A. Jones	Mr. W.T. Wheeler
Mr. E. Johnson	Mr. D.H. Parry
Mr. R. Jones	

Officers of the Council.

CLERK: Mr. G.D. Spearing

Chief Sanitary Inspector & Surveyor

Mr. L. Whittingham, M.R.S.I., M.S.I.A., Cert.  
S.I.B., Cert. Inspector of Meat & Other Foods.

Sanitary Inspector ... Vacant

Water Inspector

Mr. W. J. Hodge

Medical Officer of Health

Dr. J. J. O'Reilly, M.B., B.Ch., D.P.H.

Deputy Clerk & Valuation Officer

Mr. T. T. Birbeck, F.A.I.

Rate Collectors

Caldicot Collection District	...	Mr. E. Squibbs
Mathern Collection District	...	Mr. M. E. Smith
Shirenewton Collection District	...	Mr. F. C. Price



June, 1944

To The Chairman & Members of  
Chepstow Urban and Rural District Councils:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report on the Health of the people and the Public Health activities of your Councils during the year 1943.

Apart from the diphtheria outbreak which is fully dealt with in the appropriate section, the local experience reflected the national experience. Thus we had at the end of the year a short but very sharp outbreak of influenza which must have been of the greatest infectivity judged by its explosive course; its onset recalled the pandemic of 1918 but it differed entirely in its subsequent course - no second peak followed in the spring and the killing factor, the septic pneumonia of 1918 - was not occurring.

There is no evidence that the feeding of children or adults is in any essential deficient, indeed it is one of the paradoxes of the war that people generally are better fed and fitter than before. That there are many factors detrimental to health and incapable of alteration during war is very certain.

Fatigue is prevalent, Housing conditions have deteriorated and there is the individual grief and anxiety inseparable from war. As against that - another paradox - many have recovered vitality and nervous stability from steady employment, and the very considerable neurotic population of the pre-war years has largely disappeared.

Communicable skin disease has become well established - scabies and impetigo especially. That was inevitable and normal conditions will be established only after the war, and then slowly. Scabies, the most important of these was a great rarity here a decade ago. The speed with which a family clears itself of scabies is not a bad measure of its sanitary standard, and indeed of its social adequacy.

MILK. The statute book contains many Acts designed to establish the purity of milk. They have largely failed, for the brutal truth is that raw milk is never quite safe and is often badly contaminated. Another bill is at the time of writing before parliament; its proposals in the form of a white paper have been before the Councils. Further powers are being sought to deal with the problem of clean production and milk safety and it is proposed to transfer largely the enforcement of the law from Local Councils to the Ministry of Agriculture. This it is claimed puts all aspects of the dairy industry under the one department which is thus given the responsibility and the means to ensure a safe milk supply. It is claimed that the Local Authorities are very uneven in their supervision of farms and dairies, at best trying hard with inadequate powers and too often, especially in the important Rural Areas, doing little worth while. A reasonable case was made out for the Local Authorities based on the inadequacy of powers and the increase in expenditure proposed by the Ministry - it was contended that the increase in powers and additional outlay would bring about any expected improvement without excluding the Councils.

However milk safe or unsafe is the issue and it is the fact that there has been much preventable suffering and death caused by the long failure to

find adequate remedies. The case for the Councils is weakened by the contrast between their long tolerance of an unsatisfactory milk situation and their marked reaction to a proposed curtailment of power. Nor is their case in parliament having a happy advocacy.

That the proposed enforcement of safety is an attack on 'FREEDOM' and the price is too great even for clean milk is the contention.

I put the public health conception of the position when I say that the sanitary conscience and behaviour of a milk producer or vendor is very much the concern of the consumer and it is the bare obligation of parliament to intervene effectively to eliminate preventible dirt and preventible disease.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS and VITAL STATISTICS

	<u>URBAN</u>	<u>RURAL</u>
Population figures omitted during the War.		
<u>BIRTHS.</u>		
Total Live Births	71 (90)	187 (226)
Male	32	94
Female	39	93
Illegitimate Births	6 (6)	11 (16)
Still Births (all legitimate)	1 (2)	8 (6)
<u>DEATHS.</u>		
Total Deaths	62 (54)	115 (111)
Male	36	62
Female	26	53
Infants under one year	5 (2)	5 (5)
one in each district illegitimate		
Maternal Mortality	0	0
(Previous year's figures in brackets)		

SOME REGISTERED CAUSES OF DEATH

	<u>Urban</u>	<u>Rural</u>
Cancer (all forms)	11 (5)	17 (9)
Tuberculosis (all forms)	1 (1)	3 (2)
Influenza	2 (1)	3 (1)
Bronchitis	3 (2)	5 (5)
Pneumonia	4 (2)	10 (3)
"Strokes" (intracranial vascular lesions)	9 (4)	11 (6)
Heart Disease	14 (11)	35 (17)
Other Diseases of the circulatory system	0	1 (0)
Road Traffic Accidents	0	0
Other Violent Causes	3 (2)	3 (3)
Appendicitis	2 (1)	0

(here figures in brackets represent MALES  
the other figures represent TOTALS)

Of the infectious diseases, only pneumonia and influenza are represented, and indeed they fit with some difficulty into the infectious disease group.

Although the national birth-rate is rising the local figures show a decline, especially the Urban figures. No cause suggests itself for this, and is probably a chance fluctuation. In the previous year both Districts exceeded the national birth rate, and the Rural very greatly.



# SANITARY OFFICER'S REPORTS.

## CHEPSTOW URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

### Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector's Annual Report for the year 1943.

Water Sampling. Three samples of water were taken for bacteriological analysis during the year and all were found to be satisfactory.

Sewers and Sewage Disposal. Minor repairs, including the provision of a new manhole were undertaken on the Hardwick Hill sewer.

Closet Accom. No conversions to water carriage system were effected during the years.

Refuse Collect. The Council's Lorry is still without a cover a point mentioned in two preceding reports. Salvage sales were as follows :-

53 tons 15 cwts. 2 qrs. paper	...	£346.13. 0
10 tons 14 cwts. iron	...	15.15. 9
7 tons 16 cwts. 2 qrs. Tins	...	10. 8. 8
4 tons 1 cwt. Rags, Sacks etc.	...	40.18. 6
1 ton 5 cwts. 3 qrs. Bones	...	3. 9.10
1 ton 1 cwt. 2 qrs. rubber	...	1. 1. 6
73 lbs. Aluminium	...	1. 8. 9
68 lbs. Brass	...	10. 2
56 lbs. Lead	...	8. 0
32 lbs. Copper	...	12.10
		<hr/>
		£421. 7. 0

Schools. Satisfactory sanitary conditions generally throughout the year.

Inspections during year.	To complaints or defects.	...	39
	Revisits to premises under notice	...	37
	Interviews with Owners or Agents	...	21
	To Shops & Foodstores	...	46
	To Cattle Market	...	11
	Re Refuse Collection and Salvage	...	9
	To Public Conveniences and dumps	...	12
	Re Rats and Mice	...	16
	To Lodging Houses	...	5
	Re Infectious Diseases & Disinfection	...	35
	To dirty or verminous premises	...	6
	Re water sampling	...	3
	Re Overcrowding	...	1
	To Dairies & Farms	...	5
	To Factories	...	3
TOTAL			<hr/>
			249

Work Done. By Owners after informal notice:-

Smoke nuisance abated	...	1
Dangerous structure made safe	...	1
Drainage repairs	...	9
Ceilings repaired	...	1
Water services repaired	...	1
Sanitary conveniences repaired	...	2
Dampness ameliorated	...	1
Repairs to dairies	...	1
TOTAL		<hr/>
		17

By Owners after Statutory Notice:-

Drainage repairs	...	1
------------------	-----	---

Notices served.	Informal under P.H.Acts	...	37
	Statutory under P.H.Acts	...	2

Shops	No progress in improved sanitary facilities during the year.		
Eradication of Bugs.	Two vacated Council houses were dealt with during the year by means of spraying liquid vermicide combined with use of sulphur lamps. Both jobs were successfully dealt with.		
Rats and Mice.	With the 1919 Act must now be coupled the Infestation Order 1943, whereby the Ministry of Food are campaigning throughout the country in the matter. The Ministry's officials have inspected your area and the result of this action together with reports on the progress made belong to the 1944 report rather than this one. It may be stated however that owners of business premises are keen in some instances, while other business premises owners and most private owners and tenants display a distinct apathy to the question. The Council has been more than willing to issue baits and some increase in the use of this facility can be recorded. 385 rats were caught and destroyed on the Council dump at Hardwick during the year.		
Housing.	Dwellinghouses inspected under P.H. Acts or Housing Acts	...	39
	Number of inspections made for the purpose		76
	Number of dwellinghouses recorded under Housing consolidated Regulations	...	Nil
	Number of inspections for the purpose	...	Nil
	Number of dwellinghouses injurious or dangerous to health	...	Nil
	Number of dwellinghouses not in all respects fit for habitation	...	39
	Number of houses rendered fit by informal action		14
	Number of dwellinghouses rendered fit by statutory action	...	1
Overcrowding.	No action.		
Lodging Houses	The one "Common Lodging House" in the area was closed during the year.		
Houses let in Lodgings.	One tenement house is kept in a varying degree of cleanliness from time to time, owing to lack of suitable labour to supervise. The question of the continued use of this place should receive early attention after the War.		
Building Byelaws.	One temporary structure used as a Chapel was licenced during the year, such licence to be reviewed annually.		
Milk	Re-registration and re-licencing was undertaken during the year, a task long overdue. The position at the moment is :		
	Retail Purveyors	...	7
	Wholesale Producers	...	4
	Minor repairs to floors were executed at one dairy.		
Meat & Other Foods.	Condemned during the year and destroyed :-		
	Sprats	...	168 lbs.
	Luncheon meat	...	94 tins
	Cereals	...	3 pkts
	Unsweetened milk	...	51 tins
	Peas	...	2 tins
	Beans	...	31 tins
	Sardines	...	13 tins
	Self Raising flour	...	21 lbs.
	Potatoes	...	77 lbs.
	Plumbs	...	96 tins



Meat & Other	Fish, various	...	...	546 lbs.
Foods (Contd.)	Custard powder	...	...	2 tins
	Paste, Meat	...	...	1 Pot
	Sweetened milk	...	...	10 tins
	Salmon	...	...	10 tins
	Strawberries	...	...	30 tins
	Soup	...	...	4 tins
	Frozen beef	...	...	212 lbs.
	Beef cubes	...	...	5 dozen
	Butter	...	...	2 cwts.
	Bacon	...	...	28 lbs.
	Bun Flour	...	...	36 pkts
	Steak	...	...	4 tins
	Marmalade	...	...	2 tins
	Tomatoes	...	...	2 tins
	Carrots	...	...	1 tin
	Rice	...	...	14 lbs.

Market.

The statistics for the year were as follows :-

Number of Markets held	...	29
Sheep	...	10,082
Pigs	...	1,339
Calves	...	1,607
Cattle	...	1,502
Carts & Lorries	...	1,410
Horses	...	11
Ducks	...	46
Goats	...	6
Fowls	...	112
Rabbits	...	32
Geese	...	45
Ferrets	...	5
Dogs	...	5

E. T. Williams

Member of the Royal Sanitary Institute.

Certificate of the Joint Board.

Meat & Foods Cert. Royal Sanitary Institute.

CHEPSTOW RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Surveyor and Sanitary Inspectors  
Annual Report for the Year 1943.

Water Supplies.	During the year the Council's main at Caerwent Brook has been extended to serve cottages at The Brockwells. At Rogiet additional branch mains have been paid to supply the 50 G.W.R. Bungalows.		
Sewers and Sewage Disposal.	The drains from the 50 new bungalows at Rogiet have been connected to the Rogiet sewer. The ejector plant in connection with the scheme is owned and maintained by the G.W.R.		
	Salvage sales were as follows :-		
	Flattened Tins	...	30.15. 0
	Bottles and Flagons	...	28. 0. 1
	Waste Paper	...	256.17. 4
	Jam Jars	...	21. 7. 9 $\frac{1}{2}$
	Cast Iron	...	47.12. 6
	Bones	...	13. 5. 2
	Rubber	...	6.15. 0
	Rags	...	98.13. 4
	Sundries	...	15. 0. 3
			<hr/> 518. 6. 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ <hr/>
Closet Accommodation.	8 connections to the water carriage system were effected during the year.		
Refuse Collection.	This is carried out by the Council employing direct labour and is confined to the parishes of Portskewett, Rogiet, and Caldicot. Other parishes are desirous of obtaining this service but while the acute shortage of labour persists this is not practicable.		
Schools.	Sanitary conditions have been improved at 2 schools during the year.		
Inspections during the year.	Dairies and Cowsheds	...	35
	Re drainage work	...	167
	Re Water meters	...	250
	Re Water supply	...	180
	Visits re housing	...	50
	Re Vermin	...	8
	Re infectious disease and disinfection	...	34
	Schools	...	6
	Shops	...	49
	Re Air Raid Shelters	...	450
	Re War Damage	...	9
	Miscellaneous Visits	...	470
Work Done.	<u>By owners after Informal Notices</u>		
	Dairies & Cowsheds Repaired	...	4
	Housing Repairs	...	10
	Drainage repairs	...	7
	Nuisances abated	...	4
	<u>By owners after Statutory Notices</u>		
	Housing repairs	...	6
	Drainage repairs	...	2
	Nuisances abated	...	2
Notices served.	Informal under P.H.Acts	...	11
	Statutory under P.H.Acts	...	6
Shops.	No progress in improved sanitary facilities during the year.		
Eradication of Bugs.	Disinfestations have been successfully carried out at two premises during the year.		

Rats and  
Mice.

A survey of the district has brought to light numerous infestations which will have to be dealt with under the Infestation Order 1943. The Council have entered into an agreement with the County War Agricultural Executive Committee for the destruction of the rats at the salvage depot and the refuse tips.

Housing.

Dwellinghouses inspected under P.H.Acts or Housing Acts	...	35
Number of inspections made for the purpose		50
Number of dwellinghouses recorded under Housing Consolidated Regulations		Nil
Number of inspections for the purpose		Nil
Number of dwellinghouses injurious or dangerous to health	...	Nil
Number of dwellinghouses not in all respects fit for human Habitation	...	20
Number of houses rendered fit by informal action	...	10

Proceedings under Sections 9,10 & 16 of Housing Act 1936.

Number of houses in respect of which notices were served.		6
Number of houses rendered fit by statutory action (by owners)		6

Proceedings under P.H.Acts

Number of houses in respect of which notices were served		4
Number of houses rendered fit by statutory action		3

Proceedings under Sections 11 & 13 of Housing Act 1936

Number of houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made.		Nil
Number of houses demolished		Nil

Overcrowding

No action has been taken during the year.

Building Byelaws.

During the year plans for 4 buildings were approved and 54 new buildings were erected.

Milk and Dairies.

Repairs to cowsheds have been carried out at 4 premises. In one instance the Council took legal proceedings for offences under the Milk and Dairies Order 1926, and obtained a conviction.

Meat & Other Foods.

Condemned during the year and destroyed:-

Butchers Meat	...	40 lbs.
Cooked Ham	...	155 lbs.
Tinned Meat	...	44 lbs.
Cheese	...	96 lbs.

#### Prevalance and Control over Infectious Diseases

##### Diseases Notified in 1943.

		Urban	Rural
Typhoid	...	-	-
Scarlet Fever	...	18	30
Whooping Cough	...	29	40
Diphtheria	...	27	9
Erysipelas	...	-	1
Smallpox	...	-	-
Measles	...	46	77
Pneumonia	...	4	-
Puerperal Pyrexia	...	2	1
Cerebro Spinal Fever	...	-	1

##### Deaths from these Diseases

Pneumonia	...	4	10
Cerebro Spinal Fever	...	-	1



### Diphtheria Immunisation.

The position at December 31st 1943 compared with the previous year is shown in the following table.

	<u>1 - 5 years</u>		<u>5 - 15 years</u>	
	<u>1943</u>	<u>1942</u>	<u>1943</u>	<u>1942</u>
Urban	55.7	50.9	74.4	73.4
Rural	62.8	41.3	81.7	63.9

### Tuberculosis

At the date of writing (June 16th 1944) the Tuberculosis Registers for both Districts have been brought up to date, every case having been checked. The present position is set out in the following table:

	<u>Pulmonary</u>			<u>Non-Pulmonary</u>			<u>Pulmonary &amp; Non-Pulmonary</u>
	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Total</u>
Urban	5	2	7	2	5	7	14
Rural	19	13	32	8	6	14	46
<u>Cases notified in 1943</u>							
Urban	1	2	3	0	0	0	3
Rural	4	1	5	3	1	4	9
<u>Deaths in 1943</u>							
Urban	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Rural	2	0	2	0	1	1	3

  

	<u>New Cases</u>				<u>Deaths</u>			
	<u>Pulmonary</u>		<u>Non-Pulmonary</u>		<u>Pulmonary</u>		<u>Non-Pulmonary</u>	
	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>
Urban								
Age Period								
0 -								
1 -								
5 -								
15 -	1	1						
25 -		1			1			
35 -								
45 -								
55 -								
65 -								
Rural								
0 -								
1 -			2					1
5 -	1							
15 -	1		1	1				
25 -		1			1			
35 -					1			
45 -	2							
55 -								
65 -								

Dr. A. Carveth Johnson is Tuberculosis Officer and Dr. J. T. Jones assistant Tuberculosis Officer to our Districts.

Comments. These figures are satisfactory and up to the present we have not shared in the national increase in tuberculosis.

Our <sup>own</sup> experience here suggests that persons suffering from tuberculosis of the lungs and therefore likely to be constantly or intermittently infectious move about the country without any effective supervision.

The non-pulmonary cases always contain a large proportion due to infected milk, and pasteurisation is the only effective safeguard under present conditions. The local authorities will be given responsibilities in this connection under the bill now before parliament. Meanwhile it must be recorded that pasteurised milk is unobtainable here.

During 1943 five prisoners of war died of tuberculosis in the Urban District - these deaths do not appear in the tables -; and the presence of such cases does not constitute any danger to this community.

I wish in conclusion to acknowledge my indebtedness to your Clerks, Sanitary Inspectors and A.R.P. Director for much valuable assistance through the year.

I am,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Your obedient Servant

J.J.O'REILLY.

#### ADDENDUM.

#### DIPHTHERIA.

The epidemic of diphtheria was by far the most important happening of the year, presenting features which should be brought to your notice.

Three Local Authorities' areas were involved, Chepstow Urban, Chepstow Rural and Lydney Rural. It was, however, one outbreak centreing on the town and spreading into the adjoining districts. All the cases occurred within five miles of the town centre, and probably 95% of them within three miles. Of the first 77 cases the distribution was:

Chepstow Urban	...	...	...	53.
Chepstow Rural	...	...	...	13.
Lydney Rural	...	...	...	11.

For the sake of completeness therefore and by the courtesy of Dr. Carson, M.O.H. Lydney, I investigated the epidemic without regard to Local Government boundaries.

The first case came to light on November 12th, 1943, and 94 cases occurred to the 8th April, 1944. Previously, for years, these districts have had very few cases of diphtheria, and these of a very mild type, and I am unable to recall or trace any experience similar to this. Most of the early cases and many of the later ones were of striking severity, and so definite was the change in type that when only three cases had occurred, on November 16th, 1943, the following letter was addressed to the other practitioners in the town:—

"For your information:—There have been three cases of diphtheria during the present week in young adults in St. Tecla Road, Bulwark, the most recent of which appears to be of a particularly severe type. Particular 'awareness' in dealing with throats is therefore indicated."

Three deaths occurred, and in this matter I would say we were fortunate, for as judged by the throat lesions many of these cases were of extreme severity. Early diagnosis and comparatively vast doses of Antitoxin (up to 120,000 units) almost certainly affected the mortality; another factor no doubt was the comparative escape of the child population, probably as the result of immunisation. None of the fatal cases had been immunised.

From my observations the outbreak vindicated the principle of immunisation, as in our own semi-immunised community I saw no case on the dangerous list where there was a history of inoculation. The three fatal cases had not been done. The last of them, a child aged seven, being the only one of a family of five not immunised.

A full report on this outbreak was submitted to the Chief M.O., Welsh Board of Health, in which the features suggesting its source and means of spread were fully set out.

